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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JEANNE SHAHEEN, a Senator from the State of New Hampshire.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Creator God, whose breath is like the dawn of a new day, Your hands hold the paths of our steps and Your call gives direction to our lives. Direct our Senators during today's labors. Lead them to know Your power and to experience the joy of surrendering to Your purpose. Help them, Lord, to turn their ears and eyes and hearts toward You, as they approach the critical moments of decision. Remove the distractions from their hearts so that they will love You more dearly and make room in their lives for fellowship with You. As they follow Your lead, empower them to be steadfast, always abounding in Your love.

We pray in Your sacred Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JEANNE SHAHEEN led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, January 28, 2009.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable JEANNE SHAHEEN, a Senator from the State of New Hampshire, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mrs. SHAHEEN thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Madam President, following the remarks of the two leaders, the Senate will resume consideration of the Children's Health Insurance Program. The time until 11 a.m. will be for debate on the McConnell substitute amendment, with the time equally divided between the two leaders or their designees. I designate Chairman BAUCUS to handle the work on this side of the aisle. At 11 a.m., the Senate will proceed to vote in relation to the amendment. Additional rollcall votes are expected throughout the day as we continue to work through amendments to the bill.

Because of the Finance Committee and Appropriations Committee being heavily involved in the economic recovery bill yesterday, we perhaps did not get as much done as we normally would have. I expect today to be a day of work done on this underlying legislation. Amendments to the bill should be offered as soon as people feel it appropriate to offer them.

We would like to complete this legislation no later than tomorrow. With a little bit of good luck, we can finish it today, but it likely will be tomorrow. I am confident we will not have to file any procedural roadblocks on either side, and we can move forward on this legislation.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

STATE CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, let me say I share the view of the majority leader that we debate and vote on a number of amendments today. That certainly is our plan on this side of the aisle.

With regard to the SCHIP legislation, I do think we had a good day of debate yesterday, in spite of the interruptions the majority leader referred to in relation to the Finance Committee and the Appropriations Committee action on the stimulus package. I know Members of both parties were participating in that business most of the day. I particularly compliment Senators COBURN and BURR for the outstanding job they did managing the Republican time while our colleagues were occupied at that markup.

Republicans are committed to making sure every child has access to affordable health insurance. But there are some pretty important differences between Republicans and Democrats in how we get there.

Today the Senate will vote on our Republican alternative, the Kids First Act. To remind our colleagues, the Kids First Act refocuses SCHIP on its intended purpose, which is providing insurance to low-income, uninsured children.

The Kids First Act closes a number of loopholes and gimmicks that are being used to expand the definition of "low income" to families making up to \$88,000 a year. I don't know anyone in Kentucky who would characterize \$88,000 a year as low income.

Some States have used SCHIP to cover adults—remember, this is a program for children—even when thousands of eligible low-income children

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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